America In Denial, Its Neo-Colonial World Order Is Dying

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Summary

With over half of the world not standing by NATO in its war in Ukraine, US-led West needs to understand the message which is loud & clear — its neo-colonial approach & totalitarian capitalistic world order have reached their limit.

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Communism as a political system and philosophy died. This, in other words, was the victory of liberalism — democracy, free trade and freedom of speech and expression.

The Western narratives in the last three decades have had large sections of most democracies believe that the US-led liberal global order advanced science and technology, economic growth and development to the benefit of mankind. To be fair, under the American hegemony, the world did enjoy a great deal of prosperity. But, can the US-led global order alone take credit for the progress that mankind has made since it became the uncontested hegemon of the world in 1991?

Innovation and industrialisation in Europe transformed the West and the rest of the world beginning the 18th century. But it all happened on the back of the labour and raw materials from the Colonies of the British Empire and other colonial powers of the time. It is not just the Soviet Union (the antithesis of the Western Imperialism borne out of the Bolshevik revolution) that deserves to be called out for Gulag camps, man-made famines, and cultural & political purges but the West has its own share of Colonial racist crimes including extermination of millions of people, undermining indigenous cultures and brutally weeding out political resistance in its colonies on which it built its empire.

The tyranny of Western Imperialism would have continued in the form it existed in its colonies but for the fact that Nazi Germany employed the same genocidal policies at home against Jews — one among their own. The European capitalistic model combined with racism and nationalism, striking the West from within, was a moment of reckoning. Following the Jewish Holocaust, World War II forced the West to do a course correction — the British Empire withdrew from its colonies.

But the faith in the troika of capitalism, nationalism and technology did not cease. The Judea-Christian ruling classes in the West still swore by all of it. With the emergence of the US as a superpower after nuking around 200,000 people in Japan, the West reinvented the whole formula. A new form of benign nationalist-capitalistic order was engineered with the addition of universal human rights, universal suffrage and other institutions and the internal unification of Europe and the trans-Atlantic alliance with the new superpower — the US (NATO). This was liberalism — the ultimate panacea for preventing conflicts within the West and the Western civilisation from self-destruction caused by the two world wars.

Simultaneously, following WWII, the Soviet Union with its firm belief in Communism, swiftly strengthened its dominance in Eastern and Central Europe (Warsaw Treaty Organization as a counterweight to NATO), erecting a wall between the two philosophical-political systems.

Where the West had an edge over the Soviet Union, was a colonial legacy — large swathes of people in former colonies spoke the English language. The US moved rapidly to build a narrative in the English-speaking regions about how it was the do-gooder of the world with democracy, prosperity and individual liberties while the Soviet Union was the one-party system, forcibly imposing the will of an authoritarian commune on the individual with no real freedom of thought and expression. The liberal view of life has been extremely powerful since and does not have any compelling competitors in the world.

The influence of this philosophy has been so overwhelming that America's brute force, which killed millions in Korea, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Gulf and Afghanistan during the Cold War, was all justified in the name of preserving its worldview. On the other hand, the Soviet Union had hardly anything to defend itself against the criticism of its authoritarian regime and repressive military action.

The excessive spending on military, maintenance of its Central Asian republics and satellite states in Eastern Europe, weakened the USSR steadily. Most of the nations which were either in the Soviet bloc including India (though New Delhi claimed to be non-aligned) found themselves getting crushed by the burden of poverty and starvation. Even as the fundamental ideas behind Communism — socialism, egalitarianism and equality remain powerful, the system on which the Soviet Union was founded, failed. Marxism with Chinese characteristics, which became Maoism — an equally authoritarian philosophy — did not pose any challenge to the liberal world order either.

With the dissolution of the USSR, liberalism was the singular winner, ushering the world into American unipolarity.

Totalitarian Neo-Colonial Capitalism

But in the last three decades, the "liberal" world order exposed its totalitarian characteristics too. While the US diplomacy peddled the rhetoric of the "rules-based order", its corporate lobbies in arms, energy, pharmaceuticals and technology devised new instruments of colonialism which helped maintain its pre-eminence and hegemony.

Where the crony capitalism enjoyed friendly terms of trade, the US hegemony overlooked totalitarian socio-political regimes; where it found resistance, it created conflicts exploiting ethnoreligious fault lines and raked up the bogey of human rights violations; and where it faced complete defiance, it ensured regime changes and purging of opponents. In the process, such neo-colonial policies of the West, led by the US, killed millions in its wars in the Gulf, Somalia, Bosnia, Croatia, Kosovo, Indian Kashmir, Afghanistan, Yemen, Iraq, NWFP Pakistan, Libya and Syria. On the other hand, theocratic Saudi Arabia became the supplier of not just cheap oil for the West but a propagator of jihadist Islamism in the Muslim world with an ambition to restore Arab imperialism. Authoritarian China became a manufacturer and supplier of cheap goods for the West and the rest of the world, while unrestrainedly occupying territory in its neighborhood.

While the Arab world, China and Russia remained closed socially and culturally to the American narrative of the US being a moralistic world leader, open societies of the democratic world lapped it up in good measure. The influence of the American narrative on the domestic politics of developing and under-developed nations, through mass media and technology, ensured greater dependence on the US and the pre-eminence of its hegemony. This, in effect, has been colonisation by other means.

But there are limits to even the best ingenuity. The US sold the rhetoric of 'individualism' and 'liberalism' at home and abroad till individuals could be easily manipulated. But with the information revolution, manipulating individuals into believing that the US was a

benign hegemon and still the champion of individual liberties became a major challenge in the face of multiple voices across nations questioning America's genocidal policies that have led to massive death and destruction in the world in the last three decades. The information revolution has eroded America's soft power but the superpower remains in denial.

Instead, in the last few years, the US has been doubling down on manipulation and resorting to massive data accumulation and theft, relying excessively on racial and individual profiling using data analysis, artificial intelligence and social media to manipulate individuals. In the process, the social liberal order is in tatters. Liberalism in the last three decades increasingly became a breakdown of family structure, questioning of not just tradition but modernity too, defiance of not just the social contracts but political authority as well and rejection of norms and collective wisdom even in the face of evidence. The majority in the West is on anti-depressants, sedatives and tranquillisers, with obsessive levels of individualism cutting down the population growth rate.

The Utopia of individual freedom is now on the curve from where it descends into anarchy, as we saw riots erupting in the US over 'Black Lives Matter', presidential election results and the questions of race, history, gender, etc. The violence by the totalitarian liberal is being emulated in democracies like India too, as witnessed during protests over Citizenship Amendment Act and farm laws.

Like socialism, liberalism served well as long as it did. But just like socialism, with time, the idea of liberalism expanded to the extent that it no longer is contained within the ambit of humanity, reason and ethics.

Russia-Ukraine War

The war in Ukraine is not just Russia's retaliation to check NATO's neo-colonial expansion into Eastern Europe, but yet another expose' of the totalitarian capitalism, moral decadence and absolutist hegemony of the United States.

In the last two decades, Russia has bid adieu to the baggage of the Soviet era and also to its urge for validation and acceptance by the West. Spurned by the Atlanticists, it has come to embrace its own unique identity — both socially and economically. Russians are now comfortable in their own skin — a synthesis of Slavic and Turkic ethnicities and Orthodox Christianity, Buddhism and Islam, with a deep sense of social equality.

It has struck a fine balance between capitalism and socialism, tradition and modernity, and history and the future. Its Orthodox Church enjoys a stronghold on Russian society, with Central Asian Muslims smoothly integrated into the nation and several ethnicities coexisting in harmony. It may have flaws as a democracy, and it may not have the same levels of liberties as the West enjoyed in its heydays, it may not be as rich as the West but with the credibility of the Western institutions eroding dramatically in the last three decades, Russia has little to feel embarrassed about. The US self-righteousness does not have any legs to stand on when the Russian social order and economy provide affordable living, peace and harmony to its citizens and that too, not at the expense of the rest of the world.

This is very different from the West which is struggling both internally and even externally with the questions of race and religion. While the totalitarian liberal individualism is at war with Catholicism, the Roman Church's influence on social order has itself waned due to its own compromises to align itself with the ultra-liberal society. Not just with itself, radical liberalism is also at war with Islamism and every other philosophy and civilisation in the world.

Since industrialisation, the world has been constantly debating the Capitalistic and the Communist formulations with nation or civilization remaining at the core of all such formulations. The West has almost exhausted itself by reinventing capitalism and it is about to fail for a third time, as the war in Ukraine is demonstrating. The Communist model failed conclusively, with all former communist states having adopted several features of capitalistic economies.

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With more than half of the world not standing by NATO in its war in Ukraine, the US-led West needs to understand the message which is loud and clear — its neo-colonial approach and the totalitarian capitalistic world order have reached their limit. Both bipolarity and unipolarity experiments are exhausted. Both ideologies are done. Nations remain cohesive when they have a fine balance between tradition and modernity, religion and science, and spirituality and materialism. It is time for multipolarity.

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With over two decades of work experience in the biggest media groups of India, she is one among India's most credible and fearless journalists. She has reported and written extensively on Kashmir, Pakistan's cross-border terrorism, geopolitics and international relations. As a founder of The New Indian, she has now the distinction of being the first woman entrepreneur in Indian national digital media, from Jammu & Kashmir.